

## 3-1. Planning Pointers

### How to Be an Effective Meeting or Public Hearing Participant

#### **1. *Stay Informed of City and Neighborhood Developments:***

- Be aware of construction activities in the neighborhood.
- Join neighborhood associations, community groups, or advocacy groups and consult their newsletters and websites to learn relevant city and neighborhood news.
- Keep abreast of local news through the media (newspapers, radio, and television).
- Read official notices of application hearings.
- Consult the City website for recently-filed applications and upcoming meeting agendas.

#### **2. *Do Your Research:***

- Always read the meeting agenda and all relevant agenda reports before the meeting.
- Call the meeting organizer with any questions you may have before the meeting. The meeting organizer for a City Council or Planning Commission meeting would be City staff.
- Understand which decisions are being made at the meeting.
- Determine the most effective way to influence those decisions.

#### **3. *Submit Comments in Writing:***

- Check for any deadlines to be sure your comments are submitted on time.
- Address your correspondence to a specific person or group if possible.

#### **4. *Speak to Your Item:***

- Find out what the speaking time limit will be and do not exceed it (typically two minutes).
- Submit a speaker request card if necessary.
- Know what you want to say. Outline your ideas before you speak.
- Be sure of your facts.
- Be as brief as possible.
- Refrain from making personal attacks. Be civil and courteous at all times.
- Provide solutions and ideas for solving problems.

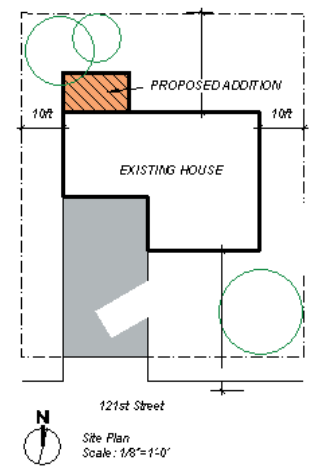
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- Refrain from repeating ideas that have already been stated. Supply new ideas. If you are in agreement with a previous speaker, simply state that fact.

### Site Plans, Elevations and Floor Plans

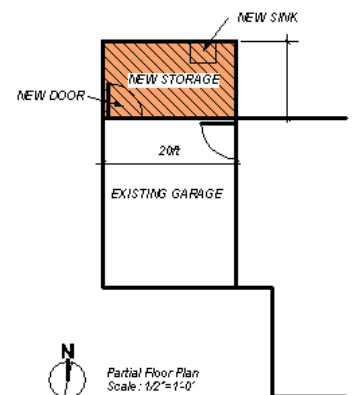
**What is a Site Plan?** A site plan is a top view (“bird’s eye”) of a property that is drawn to scale. A site plan shows:

- Property lines
- Outline of existing and proposed buildings and structures
- Distance between buildings
- Distance between buildings and property lines (setbacks)
- Parking lots, indicating parking spaces
- Driveways
- Surrounding streets
- Landscaped areas
- Easements
- Ground sign location



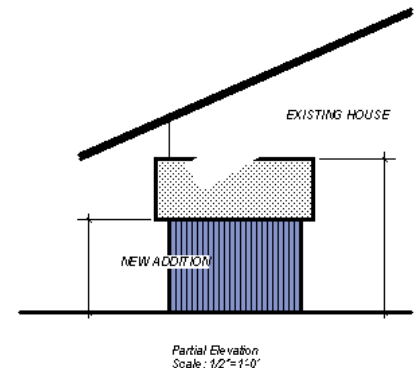
**What is an Elevation?** An elevation is a front, side or rear view of a building (or a facade) drawn to scale. An elevation should show:

- Height of building
- Exterior building materials and colors
- Windows and doors (location, size, shape, and materials indicated)
- Roof (materials indicated)
- Roof screens and or/parapets (materials indicated)
- All existing and proposed equipment
- The architecture of the building
- All four sides of the building
- Architectural details



**What is a Floor Plan?** A floor plan is a top view (“birds eye”) drawing of the interior of a building. A floor plan should show:

- Interior walls and hallways
- Restrooms
- Windows and doors
- Appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, water heater etc.
- Interior features such as fireplaces, saunas and whirlpools
- The use of all rooms shall be indicated



All site plans, elevations and floor plans must be drawn to scale. Dimensions of important features must also be called out on site

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plans, elevations and floor plans. All plans should also include north arrow, date, scale indicator, and drawing title (including address of property).

### Tips for Obtaining Timely Permits

- Make sure your application is correctly and thoroughly completed.
- Submit the project for preliminary review.
- Submit professionally drawn plans. Enlisting the services of an experienced professional can increase your project's likelihood of approval by ensuring that your project is done correctly. To find an architect that will meet your needs, contact the American Institute of Architects' Santa Clara Valley Chapter at [www.aiascv.org](http://www.aiascv.org) or call (408) 298-0611 for a list of local architects.

## 3-2. Sources of Further Information

### ***San José City Council:***

#### Contact Information

Mail: 200 E. Santa Clara Street | San Jose, CA 95113

Phone: (408) 535-4900

Email: check website for Council Members' email addresses

Web Site: [www.sanjoseca.gov/council.html](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/council.html)

### ***Agenda and Meeting information:***

The Council meets Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m., and on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Council agenda packets are available for review in a number of ways.

- Visit the bulletin board outside of City Hall;
- Call (408) 535-1255 to request a copy;
- Visit the City Clerk's Office in room 116 of City Hall during business hours; or
- On the web at [www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/agenda.htm](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/agenda.htm).
- To watch or hear council meetings online, see the council calendar, and learn about the different council committees go to [www.sanjoseca.gov/meetings.html](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/meetings.html).

### ***San José Boards and Commissions:***

#### General Contact Information

Phone: (408) 277-4424

Website: [www.sanjoseca.gov/boards.html](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/boards.html)

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### Planning Commission Contact Information:

Phone: (408) 535-3555

Website: [www.sanjoseca.gov/planning](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning)

Meets second and fourth Wednesdays of every month, at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers

### **Neighborhood Organizations:**

Phone: (408) 723-4114

Web Site: [www.sanjoseca.gov/planning](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning)

### **Permits:**

#### Building

Phone: (408) 535-3555

Web Site: [www.sanjoseca.gov/building/](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/building/)

Online Permitting: [www.sjpermits.org/permits/permits/](http://www.sjpermits.org/permits/permits/)

#### Planning

Phone: (408) 535-3555

Web Site: [www.sanjoseca.gov/planning](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning)

Online Permitting: [www.sjpermits.org/permits/permits/](http://www.sjpermits.org/permits/permits/)

#### Public Works

Phone: (408) 535-3555

Web Site: [www.sanjoseca.gov](http://www.sanjoseca.gov)

Online Permitting: [www.sjpermits.org/permits/permits/](http://www.sjpermits.org/permits/permits/)

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Information:**

For detailed information about the CEQA go to [www.ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/](http://www.ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/) or call the California Office of Planning and Research at (916) 322-2318.

### **San José 2020 General Plan:**

The General Plan can be viewed at [www.sanjoseca.gov/planning](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning).

You may also go to Planning at Development Services at 200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113 or call (408) 535-3555.

### **San José Municipal Code (including Zoning and Sign Ordinances):**

To view a copy of the Municipal Code, contact the City Clerk at (408) 535-1260. It can also be viewed online at [www.amlegal.com/sanjose\\_ca/](http://www.amlegal.com/sanjose_ca/). Title 20 of the Municipal Code is the Zoning Ordinance; Title 23 is the Sign Ordinance.

### **Zoning Map:**

The San José Zoning Maps are available for viewing at

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[www.sanjoseca.gov/planning](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning).

The official copy of the Zoning Map can also be viewed at the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department.

### ***San José Info Line:***

Recorded information about City programs and services (408) 535-3500. Some information items include: City Council, Boards and Commissions, City Contact Information, and Building.

## **Outside Agencies**

***San José Redevelopment Agency:*** The San Jose agency with the mission to revitalize and enliven San Jose's Downtown, neighborhoods, and industrial areas.

Website: [www.sjredevelopment.org](http://www.sjredevelopment.org)

Phone: (408) 535-8500

***Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority:*** An independent special district responsible for bus and light rail operations, congestion management, specific highway improvement projects, and countywide transportation planning.

Website: [www.vta.org](http://www.vta.org)

Phone: (408) 321-2300

***Santa Clara Valley Water District:*** The primary water resources agency for Santa Clara County.

Website: [www.valleywater.org](http://www.valleywater.org)

Phone: (408) 265-2600

***California Department of Transportation, District 4:*** The State's manager of interregional transportation services including all state and interstate highways.

Website: [www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/)

Phone: (510) 286-4444

***Bay Area Air Quality Management District:*** The agency committed to achieving clean air to protect the public's health and the environment.

Website: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)

Phone: (415) 749-5000

***Metropolitan Transportation Commission:*** The transportation planning, coordinating and financing agency for the nine-county San

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Francisco Bay Area.

Website: [www.mtc.ca.gov](http://www.mtc.ca.gov)

Phone: (510) 464-7700

**Association of Bay Area Governments:** the regional planning agency working to help solve problems in areas such as land use, housing, environmental quality, and economic development.

Website: [www.abag.ca.gov](http://www.abag.ca.gov)

Phone: (510) 464-7900

**Local Agency Formation Commission:** A State mandated local agency set up to oversee the boundaries of cities and special districts.

Website: [www.santaclara.lafco.ca.gov/](http://www.santaclara.lafco.ca.gov/)

Phone: (408) 299-2011

### 3-1. Glossary of Planning Terms

**Appeal:** After a land use decision is made, a citizen can request that a higher authority review the item in order to achieve a different result. This request is called an appeal. Planning Commission decisions are appealed to the City Council.

**CEQA:** The California Environmental Quality Act. In general, CEQA requires that all private and public projects be reviewed prior to approval for their potential adverse effects upon the environment.\*\*

**City Council:** A city's legislative body. The City Council is comprised of the Mayor, who is elected by the community at-large, and ten councilmembers who are elected by districts. They are responsible for enacting ordinances, imposing taxes, making appropriations, establishing policy, and hiring some city officials. The Council adopts the local general plan, zoning, and subdivision ordinance.

**Conditional Use Permit (CUP):** Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, a CUP may authorize uses not routinely allowed on a particular site. CUPs require a public hearing and if approval is granted, are usually subject to the fulfillment of certain conditions by the developer. Approval of a CUP is not a change in zoning.\*\*

**Discretionary:** When a decision maker such as a City staff member or a public official can use his or her judgment in deciding whether and how to carry out or approve a project.

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**EIR:** Environmental Impact Report. A detailed review of a proposed project, its potential adverse impacts upon the environment, measures that may avoid or reduce those impacts, and alternatives to the project.\*\*

**General Plan:** A statement of policies, including text and diagrams setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals, for the future physical development of the city.\*\*

**Initiative:** Proposed legislation or constitutional changes that are placed on the ballot by a citizen petition, to be approved or rejected by popular vote. This allows citizens to enact their own laws, independent of the state legislature or local legislative body.\*

**Land Use:** Description of what physical structures are actually on a piece of land, as well as what types of activities commonly take place on it. Some land use examples are housing, commercial activities, industrial uses, and parkland. Land use planning determines where specific structures/activities should be located.

**Ministerial:** When a decision maker such as a City staff member or a public official applies the law to the facts as presented, but uses little or no personal judgment in the decision process.

**Planning:** The process by which public agencies, mostly local governments, determine the intensity and geographical arrangements of various land uses in a community.\*

**Planning Commission:** A group of seven residents appointed by the City Council to consider land use planning matters. The commission's duties and powers are established by the City Council and might include hearing proposals to amend the general plan or rezone land, initiating planning studies (road alignments, identification of seismic hazards, etc.), and taking action on proposed subdivisions.\*\*

**Public Hearing:** A chance for the public to voice their opinions on a particular issue to a decision making body, usually the Planning Commission or the City Council. A public hearing must be opened for all items placed on a City Council, Planning Commission, or any other City board or commission agenda.

**Referendum:** The process by which citizens vote to approve or disapprove a decision made by a governing body.\*



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**Specific Plan:** A plan addressing land use distribution, open space availability, infrastructure, and infrastructure financing for a portion of the community. Specific plans put the provisions of the general plan into action.\*\*

**Subdivision:** The division of one piece of property into more than one piece of property. The primary purpose of subdividing land is to be able to sell one piece of land to multiple people.

**Urban Service Area:** The area in the City where urban services are, or will be, available to serve urban development.

**Variance:** A limited waiver from the property development standards of the zoning ordinance. Variance requests are subject to public hearing, usually before the Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement, but sometimes also by the Planning Commission and/or City Council. Variances do not allow a change in land use.\*\*

**Zoning:** Local codes regulating the use and development of property. The zoning ordinance divides the city or county into land use districts or “zones” represented on zoning maps, and specifies the allowable uses within each of those zones. It establishes development standards for each zone, such as minimum lot size, maximum height of structures, building setbacks, and yard size.

\*William Fulton, *Guide to California Planning*, second edition (Point Arena: Solano Press Books, 1999).

\*\*State of California, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, “A Citizens Guide to Planning,” <[http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning\\_guide/plan\\_index.html](http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/planning_guide/plan_index.html)>.